

South Dakota Teen Drivers

Freedom & Responsibility

So, you're getting to the age when you want to drive. Sure, there are a lot of things you will be able to do if you get a driver license, but have you thought about your new responsibilities?

Keep in mind when you start driving, you're not only responsible for your life and your vehicle, but you're also responsible for the lives of others. Think about them: passengers, pedestrians and other drivers.



Talk to your parents and decide when you're ready to get your driver license. When the time is right, you'll have questions about the process.

FACT: In 2008, nearly 6,000 people died in crashes that involved distracted driving. Distracted driving is anything that takes your eyes off the road, your hands off the steering wheel, or interrupts your concentration while driving.

How old do I have to be to get my driver license?

You must be 14 to get your first permit. You must drive on an Instruction Permit for 180 consecutive days, or 90 days with a score of 80 percent or better (both written and drive portions) of a South Dakota driver education class. A Restricted Minor's Permit may be issued after holding the Instruction Permit for the required number of days, provided you have not had any traffic convictions in the six-month period prior to upgrading to the Restricted Minor's Permit. (**Note:** Online courses or courses that do not meet state requirements cannot be used to shorten the duration of your Instruction Permit).

Do I have to come back to the exam station and change my Restricted Minor's Permit to an Operator License?

You must go to the driver exam station in person to upgrade your license from an Instruction Permit to a Restricted

Minor's Permit, but upgrading from a Restricted Minor's Permit to an Operator License can be done by mail (as long as you are 16 and haven't had any traffic convictions).

Do I need my parents with me when I apply for my license?

Yes, everyone under 18 years of age must have a parent/legal guardian with them every time they apply for a permit or license.

What documents do I need to apply for my license?

Most U.S. citizens need a certified birth certificate, social security card and two documents proving their address (the proof of address can be provided by the parent who comes to the exam station with you). Non-citizens need an unexpired permanent resident card or unexpired U.S. Visa with an unexpired I-94, social security card and two documents proving address (address documents can be provided by a parent/guardian).

Can I use my hospital birth record? No, you must bring a certified birth certificate issued by the state or county.

Can my parent/guardian cancel my driver license? Yes, the parent/guardian who signed for you to get a driver license may request to have your permit or license cancelled.

Can I get a permit to practice driving? Yes, an Instruction Permit allows you to drive from 6 a.m. to 10 p.m. if you have a licensed driver, at least 18 years old (with at least one year driving experience), seated beside you. From the hours of 10 p.m. to 6 a.m. you must have a parent/legal guardian seated beside you.

What do I do when I want to convert my Instruction Permit to an Operator License?

At age 16 you must go to the driver exam station and pass the drive test (the test is not necessary if you achieved at least an 80% grade in a state-approved driver education course within the last year). You have to hold the permit for the required 180 days (90 days with driver's ed) and you cannot have had any traffic convictions within the last six months. If your Instruction Permit has expired more than 30 days you will be required to pass the knowledge test and drive on a new permit for the 180 or 90 day period.



Fees:

Instruction Permit: \$20 (valid for one year)
Restricted Minor's Permit: No charge to upgrade from Instruction Permit (valid for 5 years).
Operator License: \$20 (valid for five years; fee is prorated for those between the ages of 17 and 20). There is no charge for those over 16 years of age upgrading from an Instruction Permit to an Operator License.



Testing

How many tests do I take when I apply for a driver license?

You will take a 25-question knowledge test and a driving test. You will also need to pass a vision screening. Obtaining the Instruction Permit only requires the knowledge test and vision screening.

How high must I score to pass?

If you fail your vision screening, no further testing can be allowed until we receive a statement from your eye doctor that shows your vision meets the requirements of state law.

You are allowed a total of three attempts to pass a combination of the knowledge and drive test before a new fee is required. For instance, if you take the knowledge test twice and pass it on the second try, you only have one try at the drive test before having to pay a new fee. An application must be completed each time you apply and you can only test once per day. Some exam stations require you to schedule a drive test in advance.

Remember, you need your parent/guardian to come with you each time you go to the driver exam station.

If I take a state approved driver education course do I need to test at the driver exam station?

If you have a driver's ed certificate, signed by a South Dakota certified driver education teacher (showing you have passed a South Dakota driver education course with at least an 80% score) you will not need to test at the driver exam station. The signed driver education certificate is good to waive testing for one year from the date it is signed. The vision test is still required. You must bring the driver education certificate with you to the driver exam station.

Do I need an Instruction Permit before I can legally drive with a driver education instructor?

No, a permit is not required as long as you are driving with a certified driver education instructor. To practice driving with anyone else requires a permit.

What if I get a ticket?

Your Instruction Permit or Restricted Minor's Permit will be suspended for 30 days if you are under 16 years old and are convicted of a traffic violation or of violating the restrictions of your permit. If you are convicted of a second violation your permit will be suspended for 90 days or until your 16th birthday, whichever is longer.

If you are convicted of a felony or Class 1 misdemeanor your Permit will be suspended until your 16th birthday (unless the law requires a longer suspension/revocation).

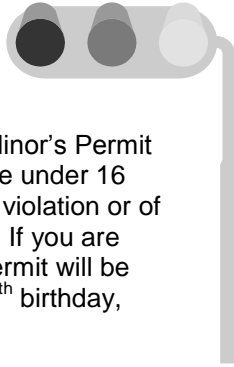
If you are 16 or 17 years of age and are driving on an Instruction Permit or Restricted Minor's Permit, your Permit will be suspended for 30 days if you are convicted of violating the restrictions of your permit.

How can I get my Permit back after a suspension?

If you have had more than one minor traffic violation or more than one violation of the restrictions of your permit, you will be required to pay a \$50 reinstatement fee (in addition to paying for a new license).

Buckling up is the single most effective thing you can do to protect yourself in a crash.

In 2008, seat belts saved more than 13,000 lives nationwide. From 2004 to 2008, seat belts saved over 75,000 lives — enough people to fill a large sports arena. During a crash, being buckled up helps keep you safe and secure inside your vehicle, whereas being completely thrown out of a vehicle is almost always deadly. Seat belts are the best defense against impaired, aggressive, and distracted drivers.



Motorcycles & Mopeds

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration estimates that helmets saved 1,829 motorcyclists' lives in 2008, and that 823 more could have been saved if all motorcyclists had worn helmets.

What is the difference between a moped and a motorcycle?

A moped is a motor driven cycle equipped with two or three wheels. The engine can be no larger than 50 cc's and cannot require clutching or shifting by the operator. A cycle with a larger engine is considered a motorcycle.

Do I need a motorcycle license to operate a moped?

No, but you must have a valid Restricted Minor's Permit or Operator License.

Can I obtain a Motorcycle Instruction Permit to learn to ride a motorcycle?

Yes, you may obtain a Motorcycle Instruction Permit by completing the vision screening and motorcycle knowledge test (you must have already passed the knowledge test for a car). The permit is valid for the operation of a motorcycle for one year between the hours of 6 a.m. to 8 p.m. You must be accompanied by a licensed motorcycle operator (on a separate motorcycle) who is at least 18 years of age and has at least one year driving experience.

No Motorcycle Instruction Permit holder may carry a passenger.

Does South Dakota have a helmet law?

Yes, all motorcycle and moped operators and passengers younger than 18 are required to wear helmets.



Other Info...

How do I get a state issued photo identification card?

You may be issued a state ID card at any age. The documents required are the same as for a driver license and parental consent is necessary if you are under 18 years of age.

What is South Dakota's seatbelt law?

All operators and front-seat passengers must wear a seatbelt. Seatbelts are required during the driver licensing road test.



What if I lose my driver license?

If you have been issued a driver license since December 30, 2009, you will need to provide two forms of identification (one with a birth date) and two documents proving your address. Your parent/guardian will need to sign for you to get a replacement driver license.

If you need to replace a driver license issued prior to December 31, 2009 you will need to bring a U.S. certified birth certificate (non-citizens will need documents issued by U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services), Social Security card and two documents proving your address (your parent/guardian may provide the address documents). You will also need a parent/guardian with you when you go to the exam station.

How do I upgrade from a Restricted Minor's Permit to an Operator License by mail?

You may upgrade your Restricted Minor's Permit by mail if you have been issued a driver license or identification card since December 30, 2009. You will need to mail: A completed driver license application (the application form is available on our website at www.dps.sd.gov). The parental consent portion of the application must be notarized. A copy of your Restricted Minor's Permit, a \$20 fee (check or money order), and two documents proving your address to:

**South Dakota Department of Public Safety
Driver Licensing Program
118 West Capitol Avenue
Pierre, SD 57501
Phone: 1.800.952.3696
Website: www.dps.sd.gov**